

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) In a system having a storage system that is owned by an owner and rented to a user, a method for renting and charging for the use of the storage system comprising the steps of:

providing the user with an initial volume of storage space of the storage system;

charging the user for use of the initial volume at a predetermined rate;

providing an added volume of storage space of the storage system as needed by the user;

charging the user for a portion of the added volume that is actually used by the user;

wherein the owner of the storage system is notified when the user begins using a portion of the added volume, and

further comprising the step of:

copying data stored in a first portion of the storage system into a second portion of the storage system and charging the user for the use of the second portion

of the storage system at a rate lower than for use of the first portion of the storage system.

32. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 31, wherein after a fixed period of time determined by a contract, the user is charged for the portion of the added volume actually used and a percentage of the portion of added volume that is not used.

33. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 31, wherein information about the state of use of the storage system by the user is recorded in a management table, and wherein the state of use information stored in the management table is used in order to determine how much the user is to be charged for renting the storage system.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 31, further comprising the steps of:

providing a display terminal to the user; and

providing a display terminal to the owner;

wherein both the user's display terminal and owner's display terminal are connected to the storage system via the internet so that both terminals can receive information regarding the state of use of the storage system by the user.

36. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 32, wherein information about the state of use of the storage system by the user is recorded in a management table, and wherein the state of use information stored in the management table is used in order to determine how much the user is to be charged for renting the storage system.

37. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 36, further comprising the steps of:

providing a display terminal to the user; and

providing a display terminal to the owner;

wherein both the user's display terminal and owner's display terminal are connected to the storage system via the internet so that both terminals can receive information regarding the state of use of the storage system by the user.

38. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 37, further comprising the step of:

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copying data stored in a first portion of the storage system into a second portion of the storage system and charging the user for the use of the second portion of the storage system at a rate lower than for use of the first portion of the storage system.

39-43. (Canceled)